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MEETING-HOUSES :

CONSIDERED HISTORICALLY AND SUGGESTIVELY.

BY REV. H. M. DEXTER.

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MEETING-HOUSES.

It was not an accident of etymology which caused the not very compact nor euphonious compound standing at the head of this essay, to be so extensively in use in New England, as the designation of buildings specially erected for the worship of God. At home our fathers had experience of the legal fact that those who went out from the established Church must leave even the name which they had been accustomed to attach to their consecrated edifices, behind them; that if they would be dissenters, they must go without "churches," and be content with some uncanonical and illegal shelter for their irregular devotions. This set them to thinking of the Scriptural aspect of the matter, and they were not long in coming to the conclusion that the use of the word "Church" as the appellation of the place where the Church meets, is unauthorized by the New Testament. In their reaction from an overdose of ecclesiasticism, the same circumstances which led them to discard marriage by the minister, a religious

service at funerals, the observance of Christmas, &c. &c., led them to a position of feeling and practice in regard to edifices for Divine worship which was, no doubt, at an extreme remove from that of those who harried them out of the green fields of Northeastern England. They were obliged, at first, to assemble by stealth, and where they could. Bradford, in his "Plimouth Plantation,"—so happily recovered of late from its supposed irreparable loss—says (p. 11) they "kept their meetings every Saboth in one place or other, exercising the worship of God amongst themselves, notwithstanding all y^e diligence & malice of their adversaries." Thus naturally, as well as conscientiously, before their emigration, they grew to call the houses where they "kept their meetings," *meeting-houses*. And though neither the most convenient nor elegant designation, there is yet enough of historic interest about the term to ensure the indefinite continuance of its use among the sons of the fathers of New England.

¹ To save encumbering the pages of this essay with too frequent foot-notes, I desire here to make general reference to the following authorities, which have been consulted in its preparation, viz: Bradford's *History of Plimouth Plantation*, Felt's *Ecclesiastical History*, and *Annals of Salem*, Harris's *History of Dorchester*, Thacher's *History of Plymouth*, Russell's *Pilgrim Memorials*, Fergusson's *Hand-book of Architecture*, Barber's *Historical Collections of Mass.*, Morton's *New England's Memorial*, Clarke's *Congregational Churches of Mass.*, Bishop Meade's *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, Lawrence's *New Hampshire Churches*, Godwin's *Churches of London*, Winkle's *English Cathedrals*, Hart's *Parish Churches*, Savage's *History of Bedford, N. H.*, Hill's *History of Mason, N. H.*, Morse's *Sherborn and Holliston*, Crowell's *History of Essex*, Field's *Centennial Address*, Bliss's *Rehoboth*, Budington's *History of the 1st Church, Charlestown*, Drake's *History of Boston*, Bacon's *Historical Discourses*, and other Town Histories, Records, and Historical Discourses, too numerous to mention.

The first meeting-places for Sabbath worship on this soil, were not even meeting-houses. The Jamestown company first worshipped under an awning of old sails tied to three or four trees. The Pilgrims spent their first Lord's-day under the cedars of Clark's island; Winthrop's company, under the huge Charlestown oak; the Barnstable emigrants around the great rock at Mattacheeset; the Middelton company under the old elm of Mattabesett. And the "Common House" at Plymouth, and the "Great House" at Mishawum, served the purpose of Sabbath worship as well as weekly shelter, until time, strength and materials could be

spared for the erection of a meeting-house. In the summer of 1622, the Plymouth colonists, as Bradford says, (*Plim. Plan.*, p. 126,) "builte a fort with good timber, both strong and comely, which was of good defence, made with a flate rofe & batlments, on which their ordnance were mounted, and wher they kepte constante watch, espetially in time of danger. It served them allso for a meeting-house, and was fitted accordingly for that use."¹ This seems to have been occupied by them for public worship until 1648, when it is recorded that a meeting-house was erected—dimensions not given—with a bell turret, which stood till 1683; when a new one took its place, 45 feet by 40 feet, and 16 feet in the walls, unceiled, with diamond glass, and a small cupola for the bell.

The Charlestown and Boston Church appear to have worshipped in the "Great House" until so large a number had removed to the Boston side of the Charles river, as to make it inconvenient to cross the ferry, when meetings were held under the trees on Copp's hill, or in private dwellings, until the return of Wilson from England in 1632, when £120 was raised by voluntary contribution for the erection

¹ Isaac de Rasleres (a Walloon—and protégé of Blommaert, a Director of the East India Company—who was Secretary of the New Netherland Colony, and in that capacity corresponded with Gov. Bradford, and visited Plymouth in 1627) wrote a letter to Blommaert, which contains the earliest known description of the Pilgrim settlement, from a visitor. He says, "Upon the hill they have a large square house, with a flat roof, made of thiek sawn planks, stayed with oak beams, upon the top of which they have six cannons, which shoot iron balls of four and five pounds, and command the surrounding country. The lower part they use for their Church, where they preach on Sundays and the usual holidays. They assemble by beat of drum, each with his musket or firelock, in front of the captain's door; they have their cloaks on, and place themselves in order, three abreast, and are led by a sergeant without beat of drum. Behind comes the Governor, in a long robe; beside him on the right hand comes the preacher, with his cloak on, and on the left hand the captain, with his side arms and cloak on, and with a small cane in his hand; and so they march in good order, and each sets his arms down near him."—See Letter, translated by J. R. Brodhead, in *Russell's Pilgrim Memorials*, pp. 137—147.

of a house of worship, and of one for Mr. Wilson, on the Boston side,—the Charlestown people buying the "Great House" for £10, and using that for their Sabbath convenience until 1639. Wilson's meeting-house was immediately put up, on the south side of what is State street, on the spot now occupied by "Brazer's Building." It had mud walls and a thatched roof, and the following is believed to be a tolerably correct representation of its general appearance, and is interesting as indicating the external auspices of public worship in Boston during the first ten years of its history as a town.



Very similar to this was the first meeting-house in Dedham, erected in 1637 and occupied until 1672; which was a low building, 36 feet by 20 feet, and 12 feet high, with a thatched roof, upon which—by an ordinance of the town, passed for security against fire,—permanently leaned a long ladder. As the populating of New England went on, we find that one of the first acts of every settlement usually was to make arrangements for the building of a meeting-house, and that the idea which ruled in its erection was that of the simplest and cheapest place of convenient assemblage and shelter, while engaged in the worship of God. Sometimes, as at Plymouth, the idea of protection was added. The first meeting-house of Dorchester was "surrounded by palisadoes," with a sentinel at the gate; and the people not only made it the place of deposit for their military stores, but used to carry their plate and other valuables thither

nightly for safe keeping. The meeting-house in Dover, N. H. was surrounded, in 1667, by a "fortification" of logs 100 feet square. The first meeting-house in Middletown, Ct., was a log hut 20 feet square, 10 feet from sill to plate, and enclosed by heavy log pickets designed to be Pequot-proof. The first, in Hingham, Ms., had a palisade, for defence against the Indians. The first, of Concord, N. H., (1730) was of logs, 40 feet by 25 feet, where worship was held for 20 years, during which time also it served the purpose of a fort; the people carrying their guns to meeting, and stacking them in the entry under charge of a sentinel, while the best gun in the parish, in the hands of the pastor, Rev. Timothy Walker, went into the pulpit, and leaned there during time of service. The first meeting-house of Shelburne, Ms.—though the town was not settled until near the date of the Revolution—was built of logs, plastered between the joints. The church in Sandisfield, Ms., was organized and Rev. Cornelius Jones, its first pastor, was ordained, in a barn.

These meeting-houses of the first epoch of New England were, then, mere rude enclosures, affording shelter from the elements, and the opportunity to hear the Word in safety, without regard to much comeliness of aspect; often, if not always, used without formal "dedication," and without thought of any special sacredness as attached to them. They appear to have been furnished with rough benches on each side of a central passage; the male portion of the audience occupying the one side, and the female, the other. The pulpit was but an inrailed stand or desk, in keeping with the other meagre appointments of the place—in one instance, (Meriden, N. H.) described as "a rude enclosure resembling a pen."

As the country became more settled, and there were more people to hear the Word, and share in the expense of public worship; as the general style of private living advanced with the increasing

opulence of the community; and as the disappearance of the savages favored safer, and therefore more numerous Sabbath assemblages, these first structures were outgrown and disused, and larger and more pretentious buildings were erected in their place. Where, by any peculiar good fortune, the town was in possession of a bell for Church purposes, the house erected had reference to that. The old meeting-house of 1668, at New Haven, was quadrangular, with a pyramidal roof—the apex surmounted by a belfry, whose bell-rope came down in the middle of the broad aisle. Dr. Bacon thinks its gallery stairs were on the outside of the building. The second Plymouth meeting-house had a bell-turret. The ancient houses in Andover and Chebacco, Ms., had the same adornment. That built in Newbury, Ms., in 1700, had four gables and a turret, and within, the roof was open to the ridge. That erected in West Springfield, Ms., in 1702, and which was 42 feet square on the ground, had a roof running up from each side towards a central point, which was crowned by a two-story turret, rising to a height of 92 feet from the ground—with gables of unique pattern—and this, although, until 1743, they had no bell, but assembled for worship at the sound of a drum.¹ The Second, in

¹ A vote was passed in Haverhill, Ms., in 1650, "that Abraham Tyler blow his horn half an hour before meeting on the Lord's Day, and on lecture days, and have one pound of pork per annum, from each family, for the same." In Westfield, Ms., a man was paid 25 shillings a year to beat a drum to call the people to meeting. In South Hadley, they assembled "at the blowing of a conch." About 1816, the first bell in Sullivan Co., N. H., was procured, and so great was the interest felt in regard to it, that it went by the name of the "*Meriden Idol*." In 1638, it was voted in Salem, Ms., that Nathaniel Porter "shall have for the sweeping of ye meeting-house and ye ringinge of ye bell fiftie shillings per annum." In Thornton, N. H., it was voted, in 1798, that "the meeting-house be swept six times a year by a saxon, chosen by vendue." Robert Bassett was desired (May 17, 1647,) by the General Court of New Haven, "to beat both the first and second drums on Lord's days and Lecture days, upon the meeting-house, that so those who live far off may hear them the more distinctly."

Middleborough, Ms., had two "ridge-poles and four gable ends." The ancient meeting house, still standing in Hingham, Ms.—the oldest now in New England—built in 1680, and which is 55 feet by 45 feet, with 20 feet posts, has a "pyramidal" roof, running up toward the center from each side; crowned with a belfry. The following view of the third edifice, erected by the First Church of Boston, and occupied by them from 1713, until 1808, (which stood where "Joy's Building" now stands, in Washington Street,) will give some idea of this style of structure—though of course this edifice was larger and more elaborate than those of the same class, built and occupied in towns of less pecuniary ability.



The reaction of feeling against the English Church and all its belongings, appears to have been still too great to permit our fathers, generally, even to attempt to approximate toward the external style of Church edifice which had been left behind in England; and they accordingly fell back upon the first principles of architecture, and seem to have sought merely to secure a building spacious enough to contain the people who desired to worship together; that should be plain enough within and without to guard against ecclesiastical pride; and that should externally suggest, in no point, the shrines of that Church which had driven them forth into this wilder-

ness. Hence arose that style of edifice which—with unessential modifications—was regnant throughout New England for more than a century, and which, from its external resemblance to the most obvious and useful adjunct to our farm-houses, used to be called—rather inevitably than irreverently—the "barn meeting-house." It was originally a perfectly plain and semi-cubical erection, without porch, tower, steeple, or chimney, and differed, in outside aspect, from an overgrown barn, almost wholly in the fact that it had a door on three of its sides, with two (sometimes three) rows of small windows piercing its walls, interrupted in their continuity on that side where the pulpit was placed, by a larger window, on a level with its exigencies of light and ventilation. From 40 to 60 windows was the allowance for such a building. Its size varied with the size and ability of the town, and number of people to be accommodated; ranging from 36 feet by 30 feet, to 72 feet by 68 feet; the average length and width of near forty, built between 1653 and 1812, whose dimensions lie before us, being a trifle over 50 feet by 40 feet. The height of the posts varied from 16 feet to 27 feet,—the average of those on our minutes being not far from 20 feet. The main front door was placed in the middle of one of the long sides; the pulpit being in the center of the other, directly opposite. The side doors were placed in the center of each of the ends of the building. Galleries were built along the side over the front door opposite the pulpit, and across the two ends over the side doors. The pulpit was lofty, and was reached by a flight of stairs on its right. That part where the speaker was to stand, projected semi-circularly from the general front, and over head—on its slender iron rod—impended the "sounding-board," which looked not unlike a huge extinguisher, made ready on some signal to descend and forever put out the light of eloquence and piety that was expected to shine

beneath it. The galleries were reached by stairs, running up in two or three of the corners of the building; which stairs were often used as seats for the children, though these sometimes (Popkins' Newbury Sermon,) sat on "a seat in the alley fixed to the outside of the pews."

The process of building was gradual. Not unfrequently years passed after the frame was raised, before the structure was complete. At South Hadley, Ms., the frame was put up in 1722, and though the house was "not large, containing only nine pews in the body of it," being built by the personal labor of the town, it was not finished until the close of 1737.

In Bedford, N. H., the frame was raised in 1755, and in 1757, a committee was appointed by the town to board and shingle it, and another to provide glass and sashes. In 1760 "long seats" were temporarily constructed, so that the edifice could be used. In 1764, it was voted to build a pulpit—which was put up in 1766. In 1766, oil with which to paint the exterior, and glass for the windows, were provided, but the town not being ready to use them, they were "lent out" to such inhabitants as could give security for their safe keeping and return; one man having "six squares," another "four," another "twenty-four," another "twelve," another "fifteen," another "a quart of oil," &c. &c. In 1784, it was voted "to lot out and sell" ground for pews; and in 1785, (thirty years after the frame was raised) the meeting-house was "finished according to vote." This fairly—though over-tardily—illustrates the general process of meeting-house erection in those days. As soon as the frame was covered in, and the floor boarded, and possibly the lower tier of windows glazed, (the others being temporarily boarded over) rough benches were put up, and the house began to be used. It was then gradually finished, as the ability of the people permitted. Squares on the floor about 6 feet by 6 feet, were originally deeded by the town to individuals, as

they became able to purchase them, on which those individuals erected pews to suit themselves (in Dedham they were called "pitts," and were 5 feet by 4½ feet)—each being obliged to build his own pew, keep it in repair, and "maintain all the glass against it." Subsequently, it became usual to require the pews to be "built with winscot worke, and all of a kind." The first meeting-house in Hampton, N. H. (1712, or thereabouts) at first had but one pew, and that for the minister's family; the rest of the people sitting on long benches in an order fixed by a yearly committee, who "dignified" the house, by assigning what was considered the best seat to the man who paid the highest tax in town; and so on. In Stratham, N. H., it was voted, when the committee had thus "dignified" the congregation, that "every person that is Seated shall Set in those Seats or pay five shillings Pir day for every day they set out of those seates in a disorderly manner to advaince themselves higher in the meeting-house."

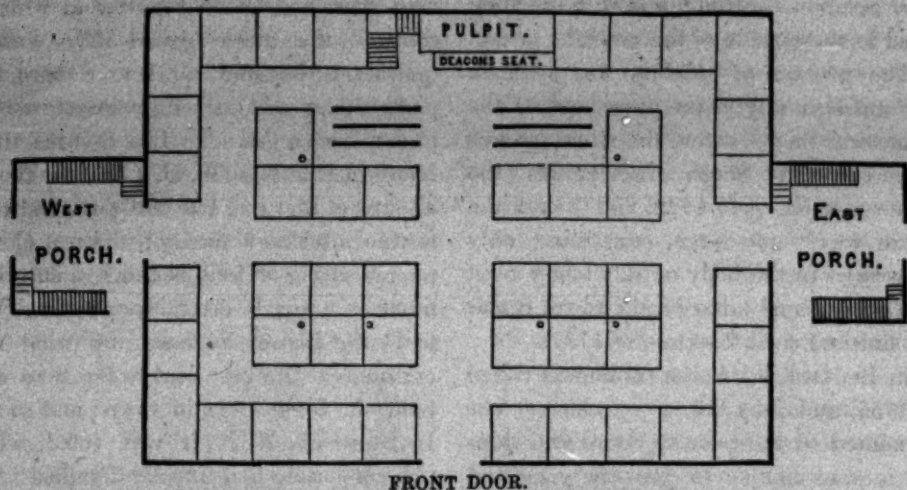
In Dedham, Ms., the greatest tax-payer had the highest seat. Sometimes this was modified,¹ as in Bedford, Ms., where, in 1731, and many subsequent years, a committee was appointed to "seat the meeting-house," and "have respect unto them that are 50 years old, and upwards;"

¹ In Holliston, Ms., the town chose a committee in 1749, "to dignify" the seats of their meeting-house, then just completed. The committee reported that the "fore seat below" should be marked first; the second, second; the third below and the fore seat in the gallery, equal and the third in dignity; and so on to seven degrees of dignity. They also proposed that the property invoice of 1748 be the rule for seating the house, "having a proper regard to age." The town accepted their report, but Geo. Fairbank, John Lealand, John Twitchell and Stephen and Jona. Foster protested against it on these grounds—(1) that the meeting was not legal, (2) that it was not opened legally, and (3) that the rule of seating adopted, was neither legal nor reasonable.

In Sturbridge, Ms., in 1741, the town "lotted out the room" on which pews should be built, on this principle; the committee being instructed to "have due regard to age, to their first beginning in them, to their bearing charges in town, and to their usefulness."

others to be seated "according to their pay." The following ground plan—drawn from memory of one of these houses, erected after it became the custom to add porches (containing the gallery

stairs, and furnishing more convenient entrance in stormy weather)—will convey a very correct idea of the general inward arrangement of these sanctuaries as finished with pews.



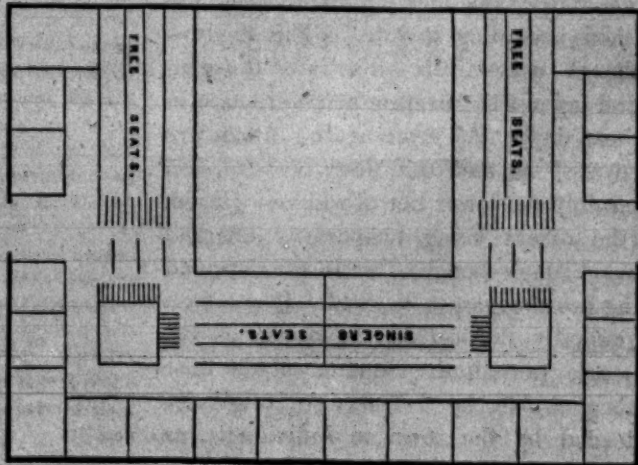
GROUND PLAN OF OLD MEETING-HOUSE.

A broad aisle ran from the front door opposite the pulpit, up to the "deacons' seat," crossed by one through the center of the length of the house, connecting the doors from the two porches. The first pew on the west, adjoining the pulpit stairs, was the "minister's pew." The pews had high sides, and a row of un-cushioned seats surrounding their interior, except where entrance was gained by the door; and there were generally a couple of high-backed, flag-bottomed chairs, standing in the center of each pew, for the more aged females of the family. The board seats were hung on hinges, so as to turn up against the side of the pew, (for convenience of standing in prayer-time,) and the resonance of their careless return to their horizontal posture, after the Amen, was sometimes suggestive of a volley of small arms. The pews were made of panel-work, surmounted by a light balustrade of miniature, ornamented columns. No furnace, or other warming apparatus, was used, but each

family brought its "foot-stove," with its little inclosed pan of coals, or a hot brick, enveloped in flannel, to alleviate the rigors of the place during the winter months. The first Church stove which we have seen mentioned in Massachusetts, was in the First Church, in Boston, in 1773. The North Church in Salem had one in 1809.

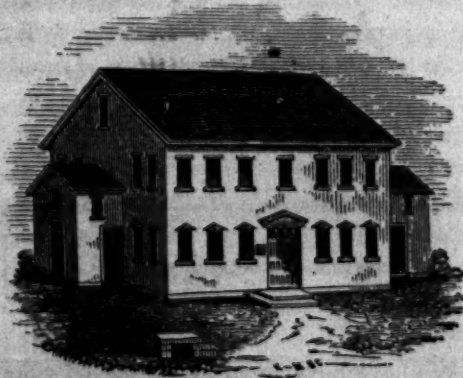
The galleries were supported on six pillars, as shown by the marks . . in the pews on the above plan. Their general arrangement will be made obvious by the following design.

PLAN OF GALLERIES.



They were entered by doors from the stairs in the porches. A row of pews ran round against the wall, on the same highest level. There were two corner pews, one on each side of the singers' seats, on the same level, and then the rapid descent to the front permitted only of long seats, which were appropriated to the singers on the side opposite the pulpit, and often to the miscellaneous multitude, on either side. The house, up stairs and below, was ceiled up to the bottom of the windows. The fronts of the galleries were panelled; the beams on which they rested, and the great beams of the house, projected from the plastering, and were planed, and—after the days of paint—painted. The pulpit and sounding-board were elaborately ornamented with panel work and mouldings.

The following cut will convey, very faithfully, the impression of the external aspect of the house we have described,—with its two porches; its huge panelled front door; the box for posting notices of town-meeting, and the like, between that door and the first window on the west; and the "horse-block" in front, from which our fathers used to mount their saddles, and our mothers their appended pillions.



As the general culture improved, it began to be felt that God might be quite as acceptably worshipped in houses that should have a comelier external aspect, and that should even suggest some of the old associations which had been left behind in the father-land. More attention was therefore bestowed upon the outward

form. The eaves and corners, the doors and porches of the old model were enriched; and soon a tower bearing a bell turret, took the place of one of the end porches. The following design accurately represents this stage of architectural progress, and is a fine specimen of the style that took the place of the "barn meeting-house" throughout New England. It is an eastern view of the house of worship which was erected, in 1794-5, in what is now West Brookfield, Ms., and which, until 1838, was occupied, in this form, by the First Congregational Church of all the Brookfields, and the oldest Church organization in the Brookfield Association.



Slight variations were made upon this, as a more elaborate and loftier steeple was desired. Sometimes one or two additional stories, decreasing in size, were interposed between the square tower and the bell turret—the latter still retaining its pepper-box terminus; exemplified in a fine example still remaining, in the house of the First Church in Roxbury, Ms. Sometimes the desired altitude was gained by adding a clear story above the ridgepole, to the tower, and then prolonging the belfry and elongating its pepper-box into a slender spire. A good example of this style was afforded by the meeting-house that stood in what is now Federal Street, in Boston, from 1744 to 1809—the predecessor of that where

Channing preached, which is just now crushed under the heel of commerce—a view of which is given below. It has historic interest, as the house in which the Massachusetts Convention of Delegates discussed and accepted the Federal Constitution; from which circumstance old “Long Lane” has since been called “Federal Street.”



The Old South meeting-house in Boston, built in 1730, is of this general style, though its spire above the belfry is larger, loftier, and more enriched. Sometimes the tower, after rising a clear story above the ridge, was elongated by the two additional stories, and the spire placed upon the whole, with a small turret at each corner of each break. Christ's Church, Boston, (erected 1723) has this form—the body of the house being 70 feet by 50 feet, by 35 feet in height; the tower 24 feet square, and 78 feet high; the two extra stories and spire adding 97 feet—making the whole height of the steeple 175 feet. Sometimes the tower was flattened against the end of the house, so as to contain three windows in a row, and occupy more than one half of that end; furnishing larger lobby space, and—it was perhaps thought—adding dignity to the structure. The old Second church of Boston, which stood in Hanover street from 1721 to 1844, had such a tower, which, after rising a little above the ridge, reduced itself to a square form, terminating in a belfry with a superjacent

spire much like the Old South. The New North Church in Boston, (erected in 1803) has such a tower, elongated in breadth, but enriched and terminating in a belfry of no great height. The West Church in Boston (erected in 1806) has a similar tower (as shown below) but elongated by an additional story, and terminating in a modest bell turret.



The only marked deviation from the general style of external structure here noticed which occurs to us as marking the century closing with 1820, or thereabouts, is the two-steepled variety, a fine example of which is given below, in the view of the house that stood in Hollis street, Boston, from 1788 to 1810; when it was taken down and removed to Weymouth.



We have never heard it remarked concerning this last style,—indeed we never heard any remark made about it, and do not know who introduced it in this country,—but it has struck us that the architect who planned this form of front must have had in his mind, as a model, the western front of St. Paul's Cathedral. There is, indeed, in that, a double por-

tico, and its two towers are much more elaborately ornamented than has been attempted here; but it is well known that Sir Christopher Wren would have reduced his double portico to a single lofty one, if the Portland quarries would then have afforded him stones of sufficient magnitude; and with all the immense difference in size, material, elaboration and grandeur of relative position, there is yet something about this simple design given above which reminds us of what always seemed to us one of the most pleasing features of the Cathedral.

This two-steepled style had a few examples in New England. We well remember a venerable church of this fashion which stood, until since 1840, in Kingston, Ms., and which made a deep impression upon our boyish mind, inasmuch as the stem of the ball crowning the apex of the south tower was in some way broken, and hung for years in its dislocated position. New Haven, Ct., contains one or two more modern erections after this manner, and Providence, R. I., has several recent edifices with double towers.

About the beginning of the present century there arose a disposition here to import the more modern forms of church architecture that prevailed abroad.—Travellers brought back glowing accounts of the excellent beauty of St. Martins-in-the-Fields, St. Mary-le-Bow; St. Brides, East St., and other churches of the English metropolis. The Puritan prejudice against costly and church-ly houses of worship had passed away, and their descendants were quite willing to expend, of their increased substance, increased sums in the erection of meeting-houses that might emulate even the more favorite structures of Europe in size and beauty. And there soon arose, in some of the chief cities of New England, houses modelled after the master-pieces of Wren and Gibbs and Shaw—like that of the Park Street Church in Boston, the First Baptist Church in Providence, the Center Church in New Haven, and others. Two

or three—like that occupied by the Beneficent Church in Providence, R. I.,—were built with domes;—distant resemblances, in little, of St. Peter's and St. Paul's. This—though done, most economically, in brick and wood—however involved an expenditure impossible to most parishes. Those, therefore, who had become dissatisfied with the old styles, and could not afford even to attempt to reproduce houses that cost from fifty to near two hundred thousand dollars above the land on which they stand,¹ were fain to content themselves with something quite as unlike the former fashion as they, without much consideration of the question whether any thing but change were to be gained by the change. Two-penny architects—who had spoiled stupid joiners to make themselves still more stupid quacks at the draught-board—fanned the growing reaction from the past, and the land was plagued with an eruption of the most hideous architectural monstrosities. We had Grecian temples with no towers, and then the old tower was hoisted from the ground and set a-straddle upon the ridge-pole of the temple; while all manner of urns and obelisks, and domes and spindles—each more hideous than another—topped the pile. This had its day, when a great Gothic invasion came over us, and for the last few years parishes have been hard at work in building "Byzantine" and "Romanesque" and "Norman" and "Lancet" and "Perpendicular" and "Tudor" churches of brick and stucco, and clapboard and shingle and plaster—about as much like the Cathedrals which they feebly misrepresent, as a pyramid of lemon ice-cream is like Bunker Hill Monument. But these are too patent to our readers to need description.

No special change in the interior arrangements of our meeting houses was made until within the last quarter cen-

¹ St. Martins-in-the-Fields (1721-6) cost £36,891; St. Brides (1680-1708), though only 99 feet by 68 feet, with a spire 226 feet in height, cost £11,430; St. Dunstons in the East, £36,000; St. Mary-Le-Bone, New Road, £60,000.

tury, when the old square pews were torn out; the pulpit was placed at the end of the house opposite the tower, and narrow pews (or "slips") were arranged so as to cover the floor,—with convenient aisle accommodations. This enabled the same floor room to seat a greatly increased number, and to seat them all more comfortably. The pulpit was lowered. So were the galleries—where they were not wholly dispensed with, except over the entrance, for the choir. About 1840, this internal arrangement was still further improved by arranging these pews—especially in large houses—on the sweep of receding circles, drawn from the speaker's desk, as a center, thus enabling all the audience to face him, while sitting squarely in their seats. These—with the addition of suitable rooms in a basement, or adjacent chapel, for those Sabbath School, and social evening services, which the piety of the present day rejoices in—are the principal changes in the interior arrangements of the sanctuary, which need to be enumerated in bringing our rapid sketch down to the present time.

Having thus considered our theme historically, it remains to treat it suggestively, which—with our readers' kind permission—we shall proceed frankly to do; albeit we are neither an architect nor the son of an architect, and have no particular right, that we know of, to know, or say anything about it, except our great *Yankee Magna Charta*—the right to think and to utter common sense on all subjects.

What ought to be the central and controlling principle in the erection of a meeting-house? What is the Christian idea of such a structure? Is such a house merely a meeting-place, where worshippers can conveniently listen, and unite in all appropriate acts of worship? Or is it essential that such a meeting-place should be enriched and dignified by the application of certain architectural features, having, either inherently or historically, special adaptation to the end proposed to be reached by it? Is preaching and

hearing the main business for which such a house should be planned; or are these subordinate to other acts of worship, requiring rather the presence of immense assemblages, uniting in something like a cathedral service? It is plain that until these questions are answered, we are not prepared to sit down to plan a house for the worship of God. They ought to be clearly answered. The exact idea that should rule every feature and subordinate every detail, must be fixed from the outset, or confusion and irrelevancy will deform, if not destroy, the fitness of the structure to its end. False reasoning upon false premises, has marred many of our most costly and elaborate erections.

There seems to be a strong disposition in the public mind to settle these questions by an appeal to the ancient times; a conviction that somewhere along the line of Ecclesiastical architecture, in old Romanesque, or Lombard, or Byzantine, or Norman, or the many-styled Gothic, is to be found the genuine idea of a building having all possible internal adaptation, and external fitness, to stand as a model for houses in which to worship God. And so far as our religious sentiments are enriched from the soil of the past, there is an unquestioned semblance of justice in this idea. Dr. Johnson said that "the man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force on the plains of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona;" and we may pity him who can pace cathedral pavements that have been worn by the tread of centuries, and not feel at least a momentary sympathy with Milton's wish:—

"let my due feet never fall
To walk the studious cloysters pale,
And love the high embowed roof,
With antique pillars massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light:
There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full voiced quire below,
In service high, and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all heaven before mine eyes."

And yet he who tries to join in a Protestant service of preaching and hearing in a cathedral, will at once become conscious of an incongruity between that service and the situation; and as the voice of a preacher half hidden behind clustering pillars, is lost adown the "long drawn aisle," and confused among the reverberations that are thrown back from the "fretted vault;" he is thrust upon the painful conviction that, somehow, the right man is not now in the right place, nor the right thing being rightly done.

The simple truth is that the cathedral churches—and all others of the old world, or the new, which have been copied, in little, from them, or suggested by them—are but imperfectly adapted to Protestant worship; were not intended for it; and are not the outgrowth of the unadulterated Christianity of the primitive ages, but rather of the corrupted forms of a later period—when the idea of public worship had passed from that of communion with God and each other, of meditation upon the expounded word, and of choral praise from every lip. We have never seen the suggestion—and yet we believe it to be susceptible of the most rigorous historic proof—that our Pilgrim Fathers re-introduced the primitive idea of houses for the worship of God, as well as the primitive idea of the Church worshipping God in them. The one was, in fact, the consequence of the other; given the same data, the same results must necessarily be wrought out. The primitive Church was a poor and defenceless band, driven to find, or make, shelter for its worship in the simplest and most modest quarters. The Pilgrim Church was a similar band, and had a similar history. During the first three centuries of the Christian era—while the Church remained in its Congregational form, and there were no bishops, but the bishops that were pastors, and bishops because they were pastors (each of his own church, and of no other); and no bishoprics that were not synonymous with

single congregations of believers, and there was therefore no call for huge edifices, or any specialities of construction—the primitive saints worshipped where they could find unmolested and comfortable shelter. At first¹ this was in private houses; in a "a large upper room furnished and prepared;" (Mark, xiv: 15,) in the open fields, in caves and catacombs. Afterward,² in the last of the second century and beginning of the third, they began to build "rude and simple structures varying in form and size, according to circumstances." (Coleman, *Christ. Antiq.* p. 182.) As they became more numerous, and in the time of Constantine gained not merely toleration but sustenance from the government, they appear not unfrequently to have taken possession of the old basilicas. These were huge edifices which the Romans were accustomed to erect in their large towns for use as a court of law, and as an exchange, or place of meeting for mercantile traffic,—these uses being so conjoined that it would be hard to say which ruled the other. They were rectangular, having a width of from one third, to one half, their length. Their floor area was divided into three parts, consisting of a central nave, and two side aisles³—each divided from the center by a single row of columns. At one end of this central nave, on a raised platform, was the tribune of the judge; either rectangular or circular. In the center of this was placed the curule chair of the *prætor*, and around, seats for the *judices*. The people stood below. Galleries, reaching around three sides, supported by the pillars that

¹ Euseb. h. e. lib. vii. c. 22. Pilny, Ep. lib. xix. Ep. 97.

² Faber, *de templor. ap. Christian. antiq.* dub. in Pott's *Sylog. Com. Theol.* vol. iii, p. 234. Mosheim, *de Eccl. ante Conat. M.* p. 463.

³ The word *aisle* will here, as in many other places in this essay, be understood to refer, not, as commonly used among us, to the passageways between pews, but to those side portions of a church or other building which are separated from the nave, or central portion, by ranges of columns supporting the roof.

divided the nave from the aisles, gave room for listeners and loiterers, women as well as men.

When the Church, in the time of Constantine, was led by her large increase of numbers to seek, and be grateful for, the use of these deserted basilicas, the progress of ambition and corruption within herself had already developed the germs of the Papal system. Instead of the simple officers of apostolic days, she had a hierarchy full-fledged,¹ with its Archbishops, Bishops, Priests and Deacons,—its sub-deacons, lectores, acolyths, exorcists, precentors, janitors and catechists. Instead of being all "brethren," (*vide*, New Test. *passim*.) there were now three distinct orders in the body; the *clergy*, multifarious in their sub-divisions; the *faithful*; and the *catechumens*. Naturally therefore, when she took possession of these buildings for the purposes of worship, she availed herself of their remarkable adaptation to her use in the condition to which her spiritual deterioration had brought her. The bishop ascended the prior's vacant throne. The clergy clustered around him on the seats whence the *judices* had forever fled. The "faithful" assumed the standing places of the merchants; and the "penitents" and "catechumens," the remoter position whence spectators had been wont to look from afar upon the clamor of the exchange. The altar in front of the apse where libations used to be poured to the gods, before, and after the conclusion of important business, was adopted as the central figure of the new Christian rites; and so, almost without change, the pagan receipt of custom and court of justice became the shrine for the worship of the paganizing Church. And when Constantine poured out his money for the building of new and magnificent temples, this basilican idea ruled in their erection; and that idea, with such additions and modifications as the full Papal worship demanded, essentially presided over the ecclesiastical

architecture of the world, down to the Reformation. And, since that day, it seems to have been so far assumed that this is—by virtue of its historic connection with the Church, if not of its inherent proprieties—the idea that ought to govern the architecture of the Christian world, that not merely Protestant cathedrals, but even little-parish churches ought, of right, to retain as many of its features as can be made consistent with their use as houses for a worship that largely consists in preaching and hearing.

But it is only necessary to enter such a cathedral as that which stands—in its unfinished grandeur, so strangely blending moss-grown and rain-worn pinnacles and buttresses, with fresh cut stones—at Cologne, to see the utter incongruity between such an edifice and any service that could be naturally associated with Protestant worship. No human voice could fill its immense finished area;² its five aisles, with the two added in each transept, with the more than seventy huge pillars, supporting its bays; would prevent the possibility of any other unity of worship among the gathered multitude, that that which should be involved in a union, on their part, in genuflections and prostrations, at the sound of the organ and the chant. And if we look at the cathedrals of England, we shall find that, though mostly less in area, they are no better adapted to the uses of Sabbath worship in the forms usual with us, than are those on the continent, which remain still in Papal hands. The average area of fourteen of the cathedrals

² Its extreme length is 445 feet; extreme breadth, 250 feet; its superficial area, 81,464 feet—nearly twelve times the area of Park Street Church. The completed design of the beautiful twin spires of its western façade would raise them to 510 feet each. It is usual to say that if this were finished, it would be the St. Peter's of Gothic architecture. St. Peter's, however, is 602 feet in interior length, and its transept is as long as the entire length of the Cologne Cathedral, (445 feet); and the top of the cross on its dome is 430 feet from the pavement. The Milan Cathedral covers a space of 107,782 square feet. The Duomo at Florence, 84,802 square feet. The Rheims Cathedral covers 68,745 square feet; that at Amlens, 71,208; Notre Dame, at Paris, 64,108.

¹ Schaff. Hist. Chr. Chh. pp. 407—414.

dral churches of England (York, Lincoln, Winchester, Westminster, Ely, Canterbury, Salisbury, Durham, Peterborough, Wells, Norwich, Worcester, Exeter, and Litchfield) is about 52,500 feet each—equivalent to a parallelogram of 262 feet, 6 inches in length, by 200 feet in width; which is equivalent to a size seven or eight times greater than that of our very largest city churches. St. Paul's is 500 feet in length, and its width varies from a minimum of 126 feet, to 180 feet at the western front, and 250 feet in the transept.

As a necessary consequence of the immensity of these churches, and their subdivision into nave, and aisles, and transept, and choir or chancel, with the chapels, or chantries, that cluster around their outer walls; making any attempt at direct centralization of the whole area around any one focus of speaking and hearing, impossible; it has followed that only a small portion of the whole building is devoted to the purpose of public worship. In St. Paul's, this portion is the choir; and the result is that, so far as the proper uses of a meeting-house are concerned, this immense pile, costing £750,000, offers no greater accommodation than would be equalled by a chapel 75 feet by 50 feet, in length and width. The cathedral at Canterbury is similarly available for a space of about 90 feet by 40 feet. York Minster affords a space of some 70 feet by 40 feet. The nave of the cathedral at Manchester is pewed over a rambling area, averaging perhaps 110 feet by 80 feet; but the space is so interrupted by the nineteen pillars that, in four rows, support the superjacent mass, that comparatively few of the high and awkward sittings are comfortable for use.

The parish churches of England are so far modelled after the cathedrals, as to prevent most of them from being suitable and convenient places for the assemblage of large audiences to hear the Word, and unite in the worship of the sanctuary. St. Botolph's, in Boston, in Lincolnshire, is

said to be the largest in the kingdom without transepts, being 282 feet in length by perhaps 125 feet in width, having a tower 282 feet in height, modelled after that of the cathedral at Antwerp. We give a wood-cut of the front of this church, drawn from a finely engraved view in Mr. Pishey Thompson's "History and Antiquities of Boston," 1856. It is especially interesting as hinting to our minds the outward circumstances of the worship of some of our fathers, before they left the English Church. As this edifice was begun to be built in 1309, it had already been standing more than 300 years when this country was settled. In it John Cotton preached before he came to be "teacher" of the First Church of this Boston, in the wilderness. It has no galleries, yet it is estimated that it will contain 5,000 people.



This unsuitableness to the proper uses of Protestant worship is by no means, however, confined to parish churches of the large class of St. Botolph's. It may be seen almost as clearly in many of much humbler dimensions. Take St. Sepulchre's, near Newgate, in London—whose bell has tolled the exit of so many

criminals—as an example. It is a parallelogram, some 120 feet by 68 feet. The interior has a narrow nave, divided by two ranges of Tuscan columns—the bases of which stand on octagon plinths (level with the tops of the pews, and subtracting near one quarter from each, on which they abut)—from two side aisles of unequal width; that on the south being the narrower. Over each of these side aisles a clumsy gallery is wedged between the pillars on the one side, and the wall on the other. A plain chapel of these dimensions (120 by 68) would be easy to speak in, and hear in, and see in; but here, what with the huge columns, and the heavy galleries, lowering like extinguishers, on either hand, over the side pews, and the general high-shouldered proportions of the structure, it is with great difficulty that the service can be made available to the listeners; and this, although a most remarkable sounding-board—in the shape of a large parabolic reflector, twelve feet in diameter—extends itself, fan-like, behind and over the Rector, to assist his own (by no means insignificant) powers of vocal propulsion. We presume that any of our readers who have ever tried to unite in the service, in Trinity Church, New York City—the most respectable in design and size, and every way the finest of the imitations of the cathedral style, which we have in this country—will join with us in the expression of the conviction that, however beautiful in themselves, however grateful in their associations of the past, and with the pleasant scenes of other lands; edifices so constructed are not, and in the nature of the case cannot be, well adapted to the purposes of that form of Sabbath worship which centers its interest in the preaching and hearing of the Gospel.

The cathedral was the central glory and guide of its time. Before its high altar the whole people clustered; there *en masse* they were swayed by the choice music, by priestly appeal from pulpits here and pulpits there, and by the quick

sympathy which crowds do generate. In its clustering chapels they confessed their sins, and received ghostly absolution.—From its mullioned windows with their “storied panes” and its agglomerated sculptures, they gathered their rude ideas of history, sacred and profane. A perfect cathedral of the middle ages was an immense museum of objects of popular interest, and thither, in lieu of books, the people went to be amused and instructed, as well as saved. The great cathedral churches at Chartres and Rheims, to this day, retain, on the one hand, some thousands of figures illustrating the Old and New Testament history, and, on the other, ranges of statues carrying the annals of France down to the period when the work was done; and, interspersed, we have, in the same sign-dialect, a whole system of moral philosophy; the virtues and vices; the arts of peace and the tools of husbandry; while over all are seen the heavenly host, with angel, and arch-angel, and cherub, and seraph. Nor was this all. The illustrious dead were buried there; and thus patriotism linked itself with the memories that clustered—in the passing centuries—around their tombs.¹ Much of this is now changed, even in Catholic countries, by the progress of popular education, causing the masses to outgrow the need and enjoyment of these architectural features. As Victor Hugo beautifully says—and it is true in a sense in which perhaps he hardly intended it—“*ceci tuera cela : le livre tuera l'Eglise.*” The book is killing the *cathedral*, though not the Church. Protestantism killed the cathedral. It has only had a lingering and inconsistent life since Wiclif and Luther and Knox. And it cannot, we think,

¹ A tablet in Westminster Abbey by the side of those of Ben Johnson, and Spenser, and Dryden, and Thomson, and Gray, and Goldsmith, and Addison, and Handel, and Burns and Scott, is now the goal of literary fame to Englishmen; as a resting place under the same dome with Abercrombie, and Brock, and Collingwood, and Cornwallis, and Gillespie, and Hardinge and Moore, and Nelson, and Pakenham, and Ponsonby, and Malcolm, and Wellington, is an incentive to win glory on the field of battle.

be denied by intelligent observers that the Puseyism which has developed itself in and around the old shrines of Popery in England gives color of truth to that harsh old saying of the Reformer of St. Andrews: "the best way to keep the rooks from returning, is to pull down their nests."

So far, then, as the ecclesiastical architecture of the past has been shaped by the ideas which led to the congenial use of the deserted basilicas of the Romans, and afterward to the erection of churches and cathedrals on the same basilican plan; or so far as it has been modelled—consciously or unconsciously—after them; it is not purely Christian in its derivation, influence, or sympathies. It is radically incompatible with the fundamental principles which govern Congregational worship. We never felt this more strongly than when, some years since, listening to a rationalistic sermon from Calvin's pulpit in the little cathedral of Geneva; where, as the sonorous periods rolled in confused reverberations among the nooks and corners of the building, we could distinctly hear just enough to satisfy us that a better sermon would be inhumanly used in being so "tortured, not accepting deliverance."

The idea which governed the worship of the primitive Christians, very clearly was that of union and communion in praise and prayer, and of instruction from the voice of him who was "over them in the Lord." A house constructed to promote this worship would necessarily make these two its cardinal principles, viz: (1.) it must seat all the worshippers socially and pleasantly together, so that, with as few obstructions as possible, they may blend thought and emotion; and (2.) it must seat them so that their relation to the teacher shall be, as nearly as possible, perfect for his speaking to them, and their listening to him. Had the primitive faith remained in its simplicity, and these ideas continued to shape (as there can be little doubt that—in the rude Christian temples,

built in the second, and beginning of the third centuries—they did at first shape) the architecture of the Church; we should long ago have seen the solution of the problem which yet perplexes the brain of our builders,—how, in the highest degree, to combine the comfort of a Christian assembly in their public worship, with all the demands of the ordinary principles of architecture on the one hand, and of the historic canons of good taste for Church edifices, on the other. We should have had a history which would have been itself a safe guide; and should not have been compelled, as now, (in our ecclesiastical edifices) to violate the associations of the past, or to retain those associations at the continual sacrifice of more or less of the special appropriateness of these edifices to their design.

When our Pilgrim Fathers reproduced the Apostolic Church, in the Apostolic spirit, they came again under the influence of those cardinal principles which governed that Church in its worship; and they, naturally, carried them out in their meeting houses, so far as their poverty, of knowledge and means, would permit. And it is very likely that He, who watches the Church with an eternal eye, saw in the first rude temples of New England a nearer approach to those of the ante-Constantine era, than any other age or land had known; as we confidently believe that He recognized in the simple rites which were performed within their humble walls, a more exact reproduction of the worship of the primitive believers, than the earth anywhere else afforded.

We hold, then, that the essential and shaping idea which ought to govern the erection of houses for the public worship of Almighty God—especially and pre-eminently where they are to be used by Congregational churches—is not that of having a particular form and aspect like those which in the English or Papal churches have been for ages associated with them; nor that they must be cruciform "because the religion of Christ cru-

cified is to be preached within their walls;" (see *Hart's Parish Churches*, p. 21.) nor that they must necessarily have a distinct nave and side aisles, and transepts (if of large size); nor that they must necessarily front the east, or somehow symbolize the Holy Trinity;¹ but that they should minister, in the most simple and direct possible manner, to the ease and comfort with which the people may "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," and "receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save their souls." Social Christian comfort in speaking and hearing, and in all the services of the sanctuary, we believe was the original, and is the genuine, and will be the millennial principle from which, as from a living seed, the idea of a truly appropriate (and therefore truly Christian) meeting-house will grow. And it is time that our churches understood this and had the courage to assume it as the corner-stone of Christian art, and build upon it. They have long enough put themselves at a disadvantage, by the assumption that basilican and cathedral architecture, which was the sympathetic and congenial outgrowth of false and Pagan ideas engrafted on the Christian system, is so far Christian architecture that it is severely disrespectful and indefensibly inartistic, if not actually unchristian, to differ from it. Others² have had penetration enough, long

¹ "Gothic art was created upon Theological, Ecclesiastical and Mystical principles; and whatsoever plan be adopted, whether it is that which embodies the nave, chancel and sanctuary, or all of these with the addition of aisles, or their combination with the addition of transepts; the ever-present symbol of the Holy Trinity will be found in them all; that is, the nave, being the commencement of the church, would in the language of the designer be read the Father, and being the first part, is of none. The chancel or cross (and which is as it were made to arise out of the nave) is of the nave alone as the Son from the Father; and the holy of holies is of the nave and of the chancel, proceeding from them, as the Spirit from the Father and the Son."—*Hart's Parish Churches*, p. 20.

² "As the peculiar habits and religious faith of the old English people, did mature a characteristic mode of buildings, a national Ecclesiastical Architecture for their religious requirements, and many still exist

ago, to discern the incongruity of that architecture with any other system of religion than that which was the meat that first grew within it and gave form to its shaping shell, and have smiled as they have seen Unitarian parishes unwittingly committing themselves to a multiplied symbolism of the Trinity, in the very shape and sign-language of their reproduction of some old Gothic temple; or a Congregational Church, whose first principles are those of simplicity of worship and the parity of its membership, unconsciously recognizing, in its chancelled house, a separation into classes, and solemn altar-mysteries which must be shielded from irreverent approach. *Suum cuique*. However well the mysteries of orientation, and chancel screen and arch, and parclose, and sacristy, and altar, and sedilia, and piscina, and credence shelf, and lectern, may fit and edify our High Church friends, they are not for us. They may be essential to their peace of mind; may add to their very cleanness of conscience. We remember the mediæval proverb: "*quisquis amat ranam, ranam putat esse Dianam*," and we will not quarrel with them for their taste. But we shall gain, as well in their respect as in our own, when we eschew all senseless and irrelevant imitations of inappropriate models, and set up for ourselves as Ecclesiastical Architects, letting the spirit of our Church theory clothe itself in an outward form that shall be as appropriate for it, as their cathedral style is, and will always be, for theirs.

This work our Pilgrim Fathers, with great good sense, began. It remains for us to take their too plain and bald idea, and carry it out with what skill and taste we can command—not by going down to the Egypt of the dark ages for architectural help, but by falling back upon the first principles of the science of building,

as monuments of their faith; so do I conclude and believe that the church architecture of England can have no true existence under a system foreign to her own."—*Hart*, p. 15.

and applying them to our demand, with use of such suggestions, gathered from the past, as are not linked with ideas radically inconsistent with, or even hostile to, our own. It would be foolish not to take advantage of whatever associations exist in the popular mind, with the consecrated edifices of the past, which rightfully belong as much to us as to any branch of the Church; whose symbolism is of the general idea of worship, and not of any particular idea, germane to the Papacy or the Episcopacy, but alien to us. Thus we would, by all means, avail ourselves of that association, into which the mind of the world has been for ages educated, which has assigned one special, though diverse outward form, to edifices dedicated to the Divine worship. It is a grateful sight to see a landscape tufted with the recognized emblems of the Christianity of the land.

"As star that shines dependent upon star
Is to the sky while we look up in love;
As to the deep, fair ships which though they move
Seem fixed to eyes that watch them from afar;
As to the sandy desert fountains are,
With palm groves shaded at wide intervals,
Where fruit around the sunburnt Native falls
Of roving tired, or desultory war;
Such to the British Isle her Christian fanes
Each linked to each for kindred services;
Her Spires, her Steeple-towers with glittering vases
Far-kenned, her Chapels lurking among trees,
Where a few villagers on bended knees
Find solace which a busy world disdains."¹

It is a grateful sight; and there is nothing in a church spire, or a general outward church-ly look, which suggests anything inappropriate to the severest simplicity of our Denominational system; but there is a hold upon the popular feeling in it which we cannot afford to ignore; and which need not prevent us—if we accept it—from purging it of all pagan dross, and adapting it most thoroughly to the uses of our own necessity. We pass, then, to consider, as briefly as we may, in detail, such minor principles as seem to us essential to the realization of the desired result in the erection of meeting-houses for Congregational churches.

1. *Position.* The same rule which

¹ Wordsworth, *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, Part III., xiii.

shapes the fashion of the house to the best convenience of the worshippers, demands that its location consult the same convenience. This will have respect to access, beauty, quietness, and light. Formerly, in our New England towns, the meeting-house was very apt to be vigorously demanded to be placed either in the geographical center of territory, or at an average remove from most of the houses of the worshippers, or at some road-fork which might be thought to meet the average of convenient access—without much reference to any other consideration. Long and grievous quarrels not unfrequently arose out this question of location. In Bedford, N. H., after discussions reaching from the settlement of the town in 1737, to 1755—during which time the matter was once "left out" to the decision of a Londonderry Committee, and an attempt was made to refer it to the General Court—it was finally voted, unanimously, on the 22d of September, of the latter year, "that all votes and conclusions that have been voted and concluded, concerning fixing a place to build a meeting house on, in this town, be, and hereby are, null and void."

When other considerations would permit, it was customary to plant the meeting-house upon the summit of the highest hill in town, so as to make it visible from a long distance. Many a fisherman, off Scituate, has prospected for cod by help of the bearings of the "Parson's sloop;" as many a sailor, steering in from the broad Atlantic, has hailed with joy that old structure on a lofty swell of Truro, which used to look as if it might have stood for Oasian's limning: "the dark brown years have passed over it; it stands alone on the hill of storms; it is seen afar by the mariner as he passes by on the dark rolling wave." Of later years, there has been a tendency to put our Church edifices on the most frequented corners; on town squares, and among banks and stores; sometimes to the great discomfort of quiet-loving worshippers.

Other things being equal, that site which combines most of convenience of access to those who are to worship in it; of comeliness, in itself, and in its effect upon the locality; of repose (for week day service as well as for Sabbath use); and of adaptation to the best demands of light and ventilation; is the best site for a house in which to worship God. While the angry contests of the past were not of a character to invite repetition, it is still true that the selection of an appropriate building spot for a new church-edifice, is a matter of importance, second only to the question of its character when erected. The best place ought to be secured, at any cost; best not merely now, but reasonably sure to remain best through all the changes of the coming century. Specially is this true of thickly settled and growing towns. Many a city Church has been gradually weakened, and at last destroyed, by a mistake made in the location of its meeting-house; or has been obliged to sacrifice its historical associations, by subsequently transplanting itself from an outworn soil, to a more fertile spot. It was a far-sighted policy which, in Boston, planted Park Street Church—at what then seemed an immense cost—on its invaluable corner; which, though objectionable for noise, is yet, and is likely indefinitely to remain, in position, unsurpassed (as, of late years, in other matters,) for popular attraction.

2. *Material.* Our early structures here were almost always of wood, forests being more plentiful than quarries; and, perhaps afterward, from the fashion which the abundance of timber had first inaugurated. In Virginia they began as we did, but afterwards resorted to solid materials. The first meeting-house at Jamestown, was of logs. The second, 24 feet by 60 feet, was of wood, and was burned in the rebellion, in 1676. The third—28 feet by 56 feet, with a tower 18 feet square, and 30 feet high—built probably soon after that date, was of brick, and its romantic ruins still beautify

the shore of the James River. Quite a number of the church erections of the early days still remain in the Old Dominion, and in a condition for use, in consequence of the durability of their materials. Among these are the Williamsburg Church, Bruton Parish—a brick cruciform structure, with a very English-looking, low tower, crowned by a two-story turret—built not far from 150 years ago; St. John's, Hampton, also cruciform, built between 1660 and 1697, and which, though used as a barrack by the British, in the war of 1812, and afterwards, for years, a common shelter for straying animals, was repaired and reconsecrated in 1830, and is now a very comely and comfortable house; the Old Smithfield, whose immensely thick brick walls and solid tower have resisted the tooth of time for 227 years, and are now in good condition; and the old Blandford Church, whose ivied gables still shelter the funeral services of the Blands, and others, who lie down to their long sleep under the stretch of its evening shadows. Nor are we altogether wanting here in similar legacies of the past. King's Chapel, Boston, (of stone) was finished in 1754; the Old South, and Brattle Street, (both of brick) in 1730 and 1773. The Old South can almost parallel the barrack experience of St. John's, above, and Brattle Street might adopt the lines which Rev. John McCabe has connected with St. Paul's, Norfolk, Va.;

"On it, time his mark has hung;
On it, hostile balls have rung;
On it, green old moss has clung;
On it, winds their dirge have sung."

It is indisputable that there is a power of pleasant association connected with a meeting-house so built as to abide through the centuries, and become, through generations, interwoven with the awe of childhood, and the dreams of youth, and the sober faith of manhood, and the fond faltering reminiscence of age, which is not to be despised as an element of power over the mind. It is the boast of some Virginians that none of their families have

ever become "Dissenters," because they have always been drawn by every tender, as well as sacred association, to the forms and places of worship which connect them with that family antiquity of which they are so proud. The old Aquia Church, between Alexandria and Fredericksburgh, Va., which had gone out of repair, and become disused, and lost its hold upon the depopulated community around it, has within the last two or three years been renovated, and gathered a congregation anew, and become once more the fountain of healing to the people, mainly through the power of these associations over the minds of a few families.

It is undeniable, also, that there is a silent testimony to religion itself in the manner in which we construct God's temples, which deserves to be considered. If we build for Divine worship, as if we were presupposing that the use of our building would be temporary, do we testify our faith in the eternity of God and of his truth? do we publicly declare our conviction that our children, and our children's children, to the latest generation, ought to worship Him as we do now—as we ought (and might) if we erected our church edifices as though we had faith to believe there would be a use for them while the world stands? Wordsworth says, of King's College Chapel, Cambridge;—

"They dreamt not of a perishable home
Who thus could build;"

and if learning is to be co-existent with the earth, yet more is religion. And there is no reason why those who believe in a Church without a Bishop, and a State without a King, should not adopt for their own temples, the language of the same poet, of the Cathedrals of his land:—

"Open your gates, ye everlasting piles!

Types of the spiritual church which God hath
reared."

We go, then, always for the most enduring material for a meeting-house which the circumstances of the case will, in reason, permit. And our hearts have

often ached, as we have seen our New England parishes expending from five to twenty, or thirty thousand dollars, upon the erection of a gingerbread structure of imported joist and plank and clapboard and putty and pigments; with a spire, saddling the roof, that is almost sure to blow over in a sudden gust, and smash its way to *terra firma*; that is reliable for reiterated repairs and perennial paint, but for little else, unless it may be chronic bad taste; and that, unless sooner burned by a defect in a flue, in twenty-five years, at the outside, will relieve the patience of the community by being superseded by something more sensible; when they stumble weekly to the service within its walls, over ledges and boulders, which, if put into the hands of a cunning mason, would not only improve the land by their absence, but erect—for the same or less money—a home-made edifice, which would last for generations, and grow dearer, as it grew more picturesque, as the years glide on. There is a church edifice in Taunton, Ms., erected perhaps a quarter century ago, by the Unitarian parish, whose ivied walls show how comely and even beautiful a house may be that is built of just such little homely stones as our farmers pile into their fences to be rid of them in the meadows. The same pleasant town now has three other fine stone meeting-houses, subsequently built by other parishes; demonstrating for its inhabitants a good taste which we admire, and trust may be widely imitated.

Where stone cannot be had, or is absolutely beyond the means at disposal, brick, if well used, may take its place. But we heartily agree with a remark in the "Book of Plans," published in 1853 by the Committee of the Albany Convention, (p. 19) that "nothing less enduring than stone is really appropriate for the walls of the house of God; nothing less enduring is in keeping with the enduring purpose of such a structure, or fit to be rendered unto Him who is from everlasting to everlasting; and the erection of anything less

substantial for a house of worship is to be tolerated only from the necessity of the case, or as a temporary expedient."

Even if the first cost of a meeting-house of stone exceed its cost in wood; in the end, if well built, it will prove the cheapest. And the very massiveness of its aspect gives it comeliness, however simple its style. Trinity Church, Boston, (1829) of which the following is a fine representation, though very plain in its details, illustrates our remark.



One thing, at least, may be considered settled alike by Christian truthfulness and good taste; that whatever material is used, should be *honestly* used. If rough ashlar, rough ashlar let it be, with joints neatly pointed, and not smeared with plaster and lined into the semblance of blocks; if brick, let it be honest brick—not bedaubed with mastic, that will begin to peel and scatter as soon as it is dry; if wood, let it be honest wood—not painted and sanded into a sand-stone that is sham-stone, and that is incongruous with every idea of fealty to a God who sees through all disguises, and demands truth first, midst, last, of his worshippers.

3. *External Style.* A coat must be cut according to its cloth; and the money that can be rightly expended upon a meeting-house, must govern its external style. The first point is, if possible, to finish the building free of debt—if not, at first, in all its details, then far enough for use, leaving to the subsequent increase of ability among those who shall worship in it, the duty of completing the design. The second point is to adapt the interior

to the best demands of all claims for use made upon it. The third point is to clothe such an interior with an external aspect that shall at once suggest its sacred use, and be, at least, simple, appropriate, self-consistent and reverent; or, if funds permit, beautiful, elaborate and impressive. There is no danger, if the interior is first adapted to Congregational use, and the exterior developed from that, that we shall have many cruciform and chancelled houses, with great pillars holding up the roof of the nave, yet rendering scores of sittings useless to their occupants. That folly is the growth of a logic which reasons the other way; assuming that the cathedral style is the true one for the external form, and then getting out of it as good an internal adaptation to our uses as the difficult circumstances of the case will warrant.

We believe, that, in modified forms, almost all styles of the church architecture of the past may be so adapted to Congregational use as not to be incongruous with it. This is particularly true of the Gothic. A beautiful church-edifice—94 feet by 47 feet, with tower and spire of 200 feet—last year erected, of white Stourton stone, for Congregational use in Birkenhead, opposite Liverpool, Eng., illustrates our remark. Here the chancel of 12 feet depth, is retained for its outside effect, but used in its lower floor for a rear entrance and two retiring rooms, and in its second story for an organ and choir gallery open to the house; so that externally we have the old look, while all internal incongruity is removed. This is sometimes done also with the cruciform style, by using one transept as a chapel for evening service; the other for a Sabbath school room; and the chancel for the minister's retiring room and church library: the structure thus having an external Gothicity which, in its internal arrangements, is entirely shorn of all that is irrelevant to simple Congregational use. A beautiful Gothic house—95 feet by 45 feet, with transepts of 28 feet, and side

spire of singular beauty, rising to a height of 235 feet—of ashlar and Caen stone, has lately been erected for Congregational use in Halifax, (Yorkshire, Eng.) in which outward correspondence with the canons of the Gothic style has been happily blended with the internal requisitions of our method of worship. Here the transepts are pewed fronting towards the pulpit, at right angles to the pews in the nave, and the organ stands in the chancel arch, with a vestry in the rear. Accommodation is afforded to 1040 adults and 200 children, at a cost of £15,000, or about \$75,000.

The great canon of taste in regard to the external style of a house of worship—having adapted it to needful internal demands, and given it a non-secular look—is never to mix styles. Whatever be the form selected, let it rule every part, so that the House of God shall not stand among buildings as a circus clown stands among men in plain clothes,—a medley from which nothing, but good sense, is excluded.

4. *Steeple.* This must be determined, as to be, or not to be, and if to be, how to be, mainly by the general external style. And yet it has importance enough to justify a separate word. We believe that a steeple

"whose Sabbath bell's harmonious chime
Floats on the breeze—the heavenliest of all sounds
That hill or vale prolongs or multiplies,"

is an essential of the true idea of a building for God's worship, especially in the country. In the city all do not need them. But the simple reminder of the duty of worship, and the sanctity of the day, which is lost to a community in the absence of a bell to call to the house of prayer, is worth too much to be sacrificed. Erase our church towers and spires, and what a cheerless and heathen aspect would our landscapes take on!

Church-edifices had towers two centuries before they had bells, and it is difficult to fix the precise idea which governed the erection of the earliest. At

first, they were circular like that, nine stories high, of the three aisled basilica still standing at Ravenna (S. Martino in Cielo d'Oro;) and that leaning at Pisa. Pope Adrian I. (A. D. 772-795) built the first square tower in Rome, and they soon became common. That of Sta. Maria in Cosmedin, illustrates the early square style. It is perhaps 15 feet by 15, and 110 feet high; without aperture for the first third of its height, then having two stories with two double round-topped windows on each side, followed by five stories with triple windows, of similar design, on each side, topped by a slight cornice and simple pyramidal roof, sloping at an angle of near 45 degrees. The Italians retained this chimney-like style through the middle ages, and never got beyond clumsily mounting an octagon, or a cone, upon the square. The Germans and French gradually pushed up the tower roof, first into gables; then into a sort of blunt pike point; next into a sharp pyramid with heavy turrets supporting the corners; and at last into a slender center spire enriched, and shooting out of a mass of clustering spirelets, planted upon the graduated buttresses of the base. In large buildings these were multiplied, until they sometimes, as at Laon, had six, besides subordinate pinnacles. The cathedrals very often have a principal one in the center of the cruciform structure, with one subordinate on each side of the west front of the nave. Forgetting that the shaping idea of a spire is an elongated roof, and that the very thought of a roof includes shelter, some German mason—anxious to do a clever thing in stone—introduced the idea of open work spires, of which the fine specimen at Friburg, 385 feet from the pavement, the spire itself being 155 feet, is the most pleasing single example, and the two less lofty twins at Burgos, (280 feet) and the two, still more diminutive, at Basle, are good specimens. All are done in the stone of which the cathedral is built.—There are some miserable imitations, in

wood, in New York city, which look like magnified martin-boxes, designed by some feeble-minded admirer of an old blunder.

It has happened that a mere tower has been rejected from a builder's plan because of its unfinished look—as if funds had failed for the completion of the design. There is a style of roofing which we have seen which saves this, and which, (if well proportioned,) may be made a pleasing feature. The following cut of the edifice belonging to the first parish in Charlestown, Ms., illustrates this—the tower being topped by a concave pyramid elongated by a cruciform finial. The tower of the Prospect street church in Cambridgeport, Ms., has a similar terminus.



Inoffensiveness is a good feature in a tower, or spire. It should not stick up out of the landscape as if some giant had driven it endwise into the earth—not knowing what else to do with it; but should rather seem to have grown up to its figure under just such a law of nature as always saves an old elm from looking like an intruder where it stands. A moderate tower is less hazardous to public comeliness than a lofty spire, as well as

less expensive and more durable. We are apt to build our spires too high. The average height of 29 of the spires of London of which we have notes, is but about 125 feet. The lofty cathedral steeples which top out their vast cruciform piles, (spreading literally over acres of ground,) cannot safely be imitated in connection with a house only large enough for the use of a congregation in speaking and hearing. It is a silly ambition which leads one parish to try to outdo another in the height of its steeple. We have a spire in Boston which looks as if it had grown sallow and lean, in standing so long on tiptoe trying to overtop Park street. Until we build for ages, of stone—our spires, especially if elaborately ornamented with pilasters and mouldings, will be often vexing the taste, and nearly always depleting the pocket. It may take a thousand dollars to stop a leak, that the storm wind makes in a single scurry, and thinks nothing of.

Much has been said, by writers who aspire to be authorities, against the placing of the steeple on the corner of the building; as being against the canons. Many of the Parish churches of London, built by Wren, however, have this peculiarity; even sometimes when the tower does not stand at the corner of two streets. St. Andrew's, Undershaft; St. Benedict's, Paul's Wharf; St. Mary's, Somerset; St. Catherine Cree; St. Michael's, Paternoster; Allhallows, the Great; St. Mary's Abchurch; St. Mary le Bow, Cheapside; St. Swithin's; St. Mildred's; St. Margaret's, Lothbury; St. Mary's, Aldermay; Allhallows, Lombard Street, and others, are instances of this: while St. Bartholomew's, by the Bank; Allhallows, Bread Street; St. Alban's, Wood Street; St. Clement's, Eastcheap and St. Nicholas', Fish Street Hill, are instances where Wren built steeples on the corners of churches, in direct juxtaposition with adjacent buildings, and sometimes—as in Allhallows—when the

corner was unoccupied! Probably people have a right to build steeples where they please, and if they can make them look well on the corner of a building, so much the better, inasmuch as it, at least, secures attention to the first canon in regard to a spire, that it ought to start visibly from the ground; makes a less absolute height produce a greater relative effect; and saves for use some of the best room in the house, opposite the pulpit, which it would spoil if planted there.

5. *Proportion.* The early tendency was to great length. The proportions of the Parish churches in England still show the same tendency. Hart suggests 90 feet by 30 feet as the proportion for a nave. From minutes of 41 of the Parish churches of London, we find that they average not far from 80 feet in length, by 54 feet in width, by 34 feet in interior height; or, roughly, their dimensions would be not far from the ratio of 8, by $5\frac{1}{2}$, by $3\frac{1}{2}$. This, we are satisfied, is not the best interior proportion for acoustic purposes, as it surely has not width enough for its length, to seat socially and conveniently the greatest number of persons in a given space. The front rows crowd the rear ones too far from the speaker's voice, before as many are seated in such a room as often wish to worship together. If a strip of width were added, it would bring its tier of people into ear-shot, without robbing any, already present, of their privilege of hearing. But if width is added, something must be reduced in height, or too much vacant space is created to be comfortably filled by one voice.

After research and experiments running through the last fifteen years, we are of opinion that the proportion of 9, by 7, by 3, is as nearly perfect for acoustic purposes, and for the convenience of seating the largest number in a given space, as any ratio that can be named. Thus a house 90 feet long, would be 70 feet wide, and 30 feet high, to the center of the arch overhead. These are the dimensions of the Franklin Street meeting-house in

Manchester, N. H., which is nearly the best for acoustic effects that we ever saw. If we are not misinformed, they are those of the Federal Street House in Newburyport, which is famous for its "whispering gallery," but which is, in fact, in every part, a "whispering" house—so easy for speaking and hearing, that a Psalm read from the pulpit, in the lowest possible distinct utterance, is perfectly audible from every seat. We do not pretend to offer any scientific reason why this particular proportion should be more effective than any other, but we throw out the suggestion as the result of no little thought, inquiry and experiment of our own, and to commend it to the thought of others.

6. *Pulpit.* The less pulpit the better for the preaching. And yet, as with us it is the focus of eyes, and interest, the pulpit must not subside into absolute insignificance. The best way is to have its platform raised from three to five feet from the floor, according to the size of the house, the presence or absence of galleries, &c.; railed in by a low balustrade; and itself so shaped as, from the front, to have a sufficiently dignified look, with the addition of just desk enough above it to hold the Bible open before the speaker. This desk top should slide, for the purpose of ready adjustment to the convenience of preachers of different height and scope of vision. The chairs, or sofa, ought always to be upon the same level with that on which the speaker stands when addressing the audience, so as to avoid all possibility of trip or fall. It would be well, also, to have the pulpit provided with some ready but noiseless means of communication with the sexton, so as to enable the preacher instantly, and without ostentation, to command his services at any needed point, and for any desired purpose. In the new meeting-house of the Broadway Church in Norwich, Conn., this is effected by a series of slides on the inside of the desk near the speaker's right hand, which communicate with similar slides in the sexton's seat,

by means of wires passing under the floor.

The best method of lighting the pulpit, where gas can be had, is, probably, by a large cluster burner directly over it in the attic, whose light shall be thrown down, through a ground glass circle in the ceiling, by a powerful reflector, directly upon the desk. A soft and diffused, yet sufficiently distinct, light may thus be gained which will not put out the eyes of speaker or hearers, nor intrude itself in any manner, upon their attention. Where gas cannot be had, an argand burner of large size, fitted with a reflector, and suspended at a suitable height over the speaker's head, will be found a pleasant and successful expedient.

7. *Pews.* The original orthography of this word was *puz*, from the Dutch *puye*; and the earliest, were simply low wooden seats with wainscoting between them, much like our present style, without its comfortable slopes. The high sided and square pew is said to have come into vogue about the time of the Reformation, and the story is that it was designed so far to conceal the worshippers within, that external eyes could not detect, on their part, a want of compliance with the order to bow at the name of Jesus, in the service. The pew of the Lord of the manor in an English parish church resembled a private box in a theatre, and had a separate entrance from outside, and sometimes was furnished with a fire-place, a hat-stand and arm-chairs. The earliest pew now remaining in use, is said to be in Eddington St. Mary, Northamptonshire, with the date of 1602.

Circular pews are a real improvement for Congregational worship, because they arrange the audience socially and sympathetically together, while giving them the best position toward the speaker. Their increased cost is a drawback. This may be avoided almost wholly, and the same effect produced, by building the pews on the chords of their arcs, instead of on their arcs themselves. They will then all

be straight pews in circular places; as will be illustrated by a design near the close of this article. Pew doors are a useless, wasteful and slamming abomination, that ought not to be tolerated in the House of the Lord. Stuffing the backs of pews is a needless expense. If a sufficient backward slope is given to the rear, the pew will be easier for use with simply a good hair cushion on the seat, than if upholstered throughout; and a good many dollars may be saved.

8. *Galleries.* Meeting-houses in cities and large towns, and wherever the population is sure to furnish hearers, and the expenses of worship are borne by the pews—should be built with galleries at the sides and end, for economy's sake. Some additional hundreds of people can thus be accommodated, and the general rate of charge be reduced by their participation, without one cent of additional expenditure for land, or for the current expenses of worship, and with but comparatively slight increase of cost in the erection of the house. They should be pitched low, and should slope up from the front so as to make the rear seats desirable. They should have ample stairways, which, where possible, should be carried up visibly inside the house, at least in part, as adding to the apparent homogeneity of the whole structure, and preventing those who sit in the gallery from feeling that they are, somehow, rather second-hand worshippers. The pews should be as well finished, and as comfortable for occupancy as any in the house. The galleries should be amply supported by iron columns underneath, so slender as not to interfere with vision below; and their weight, with that of their contents, should not be trusted to brackets that may burst from their connections in the wall; nor hung upon rods dragging from the roof-timbers. The parapet should be low, and the front thrown into some light and graceful form, so as to relieve what else is in danger of seeming heavy and clumsy.

9. *Organ and Choir.* It seems to be a

fixed fact that Congregational singing is to be restored, at least in part, in the order of the worship of God's house; and when all the children shall learn to sing as they learn to read, the people will be fitted for it. We doubt if, in the present generation, it can be successfully carried on without the aid of a choir. The position of the organ and its singing group ought, however, to be in part determined by this probability, so as not to make the house seem ill-built and *passé*, when the general culture in song may perhaps bring about the entire dismissal of choirs. It is very difficult for a congregation to keep in time with an organ in the old place in the gallery—for the same reason that it would be difficult to unite in prayer with a speaker standing there. It is not the focus of the house. It is like a congregation in one room and an organ in another, with a door open between. The organ and choir ought to be as near the focus of a house as possible, so as to be situated relatively to the people as the speaker is, that the audience may join in the singing, just as they join in the language of prayer. The best place for the organ, then, unquestionably is in a recess behind the pulpit, (arched toward the house, so as to throw its volume of tone forward,) and (when there are galleries) about midway between the level of the platform where the preacher stands, and the level of the gallery floor. This has the advantage, among others, of releasing, for sittings, that best part of the house where the organ used to stand. There are objections, however, to putting the choir behind the pulpit. Probably the very best plan would be to have the organ fill this recess, and have its "action" brought out under the pulpit, to an organist's seat fronting the pulpit, and between (and in the range of) the front row of pews. Then let the choir sit on each side of him, in the front row, or rows, of pews. They will then be in the best position—they can turn toward the audience, when singing, if desirable—for

musical effect when singing alone, and in the best position to lead the congregation to congregational singing, when that is attempted. And if the choir is ever wholly disused, no vacant space suggests a want of fitness between the present and the past. Probably fifty dollars would cover the additional expense made necessary by this construction of the organ;¹ while an organ so placed would do itself so much better justice than it can do where it usually stands, that an instrument of perhaps one-fifth smaller size would answer the same purpose.

10. *Subordinate Rooms.* These ought to include—where possible—for every church, a chapel for social, and prayer-meetings, a Sabbath School room—fitted with low seats, maps, pictures, &c., &c.—a committee room, and pastor's retiring room, which should be as near the pulpit as the plan can allow. In cities and large towns, it is important also to have a young men's room, to be used as a reading room, library, &c., &c., where the young men, who have no home but some poor boarding house attic, may feel at home, and be drawn to spend their evenings, away from the temptations of the streets, the billiard rooms, and liquor saloons. Wherever land is abundant and cheap, and means can be secured, these ought to be addenda to the main edifice on the surface of the ground, and not be crowded into a sub-story. They may take the outside look of transepts, or chancel, or both; and so add to the exterior comeliness of the erection. Or they may

¹ Substantially this arrangement is warmly recommended by Richard Storrs Willis, in his valuable little book, called "Our Church Music." He says (p. 44,) "the advantages of such a location for an organ are evident. It serves as a dignified and ornamental background for the pulpit; it is out of the way, occupying no pew-room: it is in the best possible position for sound, pouring out its full volume of tone into the open church: the choir, on the other hand, form part of the congregation, and their music must almost necessarily prove contagious, and spread to the rest of the people. * * * A low screen might protect the organist from observation, so that there would be no undue conspicuousness, either of organist or choir."

be, as in some of the New York churches, so clustered together and upon each other, as to fill out an extra quarter of length for the main building, preventing that "chunky" look which our meeting-houses are apt to have in a side view, especially when they are built with lofty spires. Where a basement position for these rooms is, however, inevitable, they must be—as they may be, by care and skill—wholly redeemed from any possibility of dampness and ill-ventilation.

One of the most absurd illustrations of the way in which fashion has ruled the form of our ecclesiastical edifices, was the copying, by our country churches—where land was superabundant—of the tomb-like "vestries" which were built, thirty years ago, under many city meeting-houses—from stress of poverty, and because ground had to be covered with silver before it could be got for use.

11. *Light, Warming, and Ventilation.* From too many windows we are in danger of getting to have too few. It is better, however, to build comparatively few, and have their light, than to build so many as to be obliged to stop them up with blinds without, and blinds within. A pleasant effect is produced by a sash of ground, or enamelled glass, which subdues the glare of the light which it admits, to that soft radiance which is most congenial with the place of worship. There should be no cross lights, and no windows in the end behind the speaker. Gas lights should be placed overhead, as in the Tremont Temple, or as far out of the range of the eyes of speaker and hearer as possible.

Good furnaces, that will not smoke, nor emit their gas into their hot-air flues, and that are so connected with the external air as to send up immense and continuous streams of pure air, heated only to a very low temperature, are the most successful heaters that we have ever seen for a meeting-house. But they must be put up, and afterwards managed, with skill and sense, or they may become an intolerable nuisance.

Ventilation, as a science, is yet too much in its infancy to warrant sure conclusions with regard to it. In the summer it may be tolerably secured by the open windows. In the winter it must be effected by furnishing the means of exit for the used air which is crowded up and out by the influx of fresh warm air from the furnaces. This may be, at least in part, secured by ventiducts, at proper distances, in the walls; with registers (which can be opened or closed at pleasure) opening into them near the main floor, and that of the galleries and near the ceiling, which communicate in the attic with a central ventilating shaft running up in the tower, or issuing from the roof in an "Emerson's" ejector. The upward delivery of this shaft must not however be left to itself; but must be aided by the heat of a cluster of gas burners (properly secured by circumjacent tin, from all possible risk of fire) which are brought within the sexton's reach in the attic by a little door opening into the ventiduct by their side. The new Broadway Church in Norwich, Conn., has some very perfect arrangements of this sort.

12. *Internal Adornment.* This must, of course, be mainly controlled by the general plan; a Gothic interior requiring one style of finish, and a Grecian, another. The great rule here must be to avoid all "frescos" and other shams. Sham chancels behind the pulpit, which would be absurd if they were real; sham cornices; and sham pilasters; and sham panels; and sham domes; and sham stone-blockings in the walls; and sham oak, or black walnut, or rosewood, for pulpit or pew, or organ; all are an abomination to the truth-loving, and therefore out of place within walls dedicated to the God of truth, who has commanded us to worship him "in sincerity and in truth." Gravity and simplicity and sincerity ought to sit enthroned upon the very aspect of God's house. Some pleasant neutral tint upon the side walls—left a little rough in the plastering, so as to take color well—and

perhaps a French gray overhead, can hardly fail to please better than the old staring white, or the elaborate, and meaningless or incongruous flourishes of the Italian wall-painters. The gilt pipes of the organ, in the recess behind the pulpit, will save that end of the house from the blank and over-broad look which it might otherwise have. If the whole finish of the house is of some of our native woods, left unpainted and simply oiled, so as to bring out the rich natural grain, an effect will be produced which will be very pleasing, at an expense very much below that of the old method of painting and graining. Chestnut is especially adapted to this. It is soft and easily wrought; it seasons well; its grain is richer than oak and of a very cheerful hue; and its first cost is now more than one quarter less than that of pine of the same quality.

We close these scattering suggestions by a plan of our own, designed for use in the city, where land must be made the most of; where meeting-houses must be comely and attractive; where everything is expensive; where the pew rents must pay the cost of worship; yet where there are thousands of people in humble pecuniary circumstances, who wish, as well as need, the Gospel, but are unable to pay high pew rents; and where, therefore, great skill must be used in shaping all the elements that come into the account to a result, which shall not repel the masses from the Congregational service. We give no advice to those who are able to build, and pay for, magnificent houses. The richer the house the better, if in good taste, and *paid for*; with a service that may not entail a burdensome expense on the hearers. We speak for a different sphere. The soldier who was rebuked for drunkenness, told his commanding officer that "it was unreasonable to expect *all* the Christian virtues for \$7 a month;" and so we beg the reader to remember that *all* the architectural virtues cannot be looked for in a house avowedly planned to furnish the most

accommodation for the least money. Our design is a compromise between various conflicting interests and elements, and is diffidently presented as meeting the conditions of the case better, we think, than anything we have seen elsewhere. The external elevation is (as below) a plain parallelogram, 100 feet by 83 feet, in outside length and width, with a corner spire, 20 feet square at the base, and 175 feet in height—intended to stand on the junction of two streets.

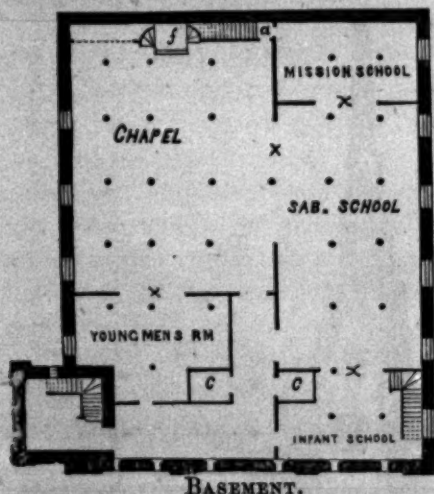


FRONT VIEW.

The outside is brick, of the simplest Romanesque; and the spire, (resembling that of the Church of the Pilgrims, Brooklyn,) besides having a very pleasing taper from the level of the bell-deck, is (we say it with confidence) at once the strongest and cheapest, of the height proposed, which can be built. From the brick gables above the clock, it is to be shingled with round-ended shingles; and as there is neither moulding nor panel, nor pilaster, upon its whole surface, there are none of the ordinary chances for leakage, and so for expensive repair.

The building is planned for a lot 100

feet square, the dry level of which is from eight to ten feet below that of the street. Advantage is taken of this fact to introduce a basement (of 12 feet in the clear) which is wholly above ground, except where the street abuts against its front; a green-banked slope, from the sidewalk height of the inner edge of each side of the lot to its level, giving the side windows of the basement air and light. The following cut will show the general arrangement of this lower story.

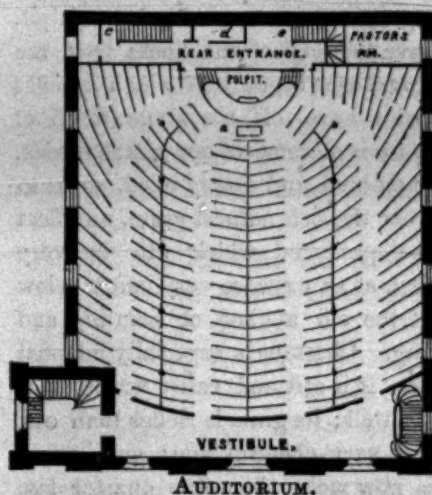


BASEMENT.

The main stairs leading down, are in the tower. These conduct to a side passage, having on the left the Young Men's Room, 35 feet 6 inches, by 21 feet. Still further, it leads to the Infant School Room (31 feet 6 inches, by 18 feet) and on the left, turns a right angle toward the Chapel, 60 feet by 45 feet; and the main Sabbath School Room, (57 feet by 31 feet 6 inches) on the right. Stairs (a) lead from the rear entrance of the house down to the Mission School Room, (31 feet 6 inches, by 18 feet); and a separate flight takes the little children down into their room, safe from the rush of the main school. These rooms may all be thrown together by opening sliding doors (x, x, x) so as to accommodate 1100, or 1200 children. The Chapel is designed to seat 425, and may be enlarged at any moment by being thrown into connection with the Young Men's Room, or the main Sabbath School Room. Two large fur-

naces, to heat the house, are designed to be placed at c. c.

The arrangement of the main auditorium will be understood from the following plan.

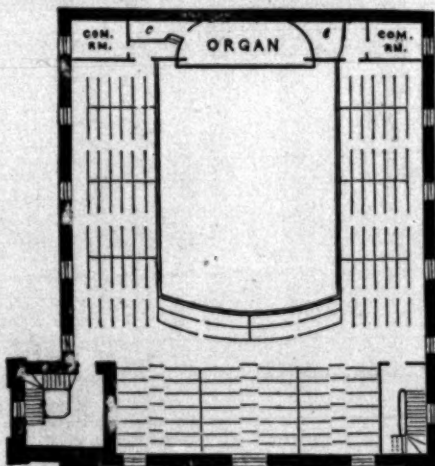


AUDITORIUM.

The vestibule explains itself, and leads directly to the four aisles, and, by stairs in the tower, and in the right corner, to the gallery floor. The pews are straight pews in circular places; to be built, as suggested above, upon the chords of their arcs, instead of upon those arcs themselves. An entrance from the side street, cuts off a ten foot rear passage, which has stairs (c) to the left gallery, (d) to the Mission School Room and Chapel below, and (e) to the right gallery; with doors, each side of the pulpit, to the main floor; and with the Pastor's room (17 feet by 9 feet) at its end. Thus easy access may instantly be had to any part of the house, from either end, and the double stairways favor the easy dispersion of the audience, and are essential to their safety in case of an alarm of fire. The organist's seat (a) is (as before suggested) between the front pews; and the choir find accommodation in the pews on either side, thus clustering around the pulpit, and gaining their most effective place in the very heart of the house.

The galleries explain themselves. The organ fills the recess (some 30 feet by 10 feet) behind the pulpit, and its floor is elevated perhaps three feet above the

speaker's platform. There is a Committee room (13 feet by 9 feet) over the Pastor's room, and another, of the same dimensions, in the corresponding corner on the other side, over the rear entrance door. A second gallery over that portion of the first, which occupies the breadth of the tower, and lies between it and the stair lobby on the other side, will prevent that vacant look which that end of the house would otherwise get from the absence of the organ, and pleasantly seat a considerable number, at a small additional cost.



GALLERIES.

The entire interior wood work—pews, pulpit, organ, gallery front, &c. &c., is designed to be of chestnut, simply oiled, and the pews to have no upholstering except their seat cushions. The ceiling is to be finished up some fifteen feet into the roof, in the center (less over the galleries) to save height of walls, and promote interior comeliness, while from the peculiar framework of the roof strength is secured instead of weakness, by the process. The walls are to be hollow, with the plastering directly upon them. By all these various economies the cost of the house (we speak from the written estimates of experienced builders,) will be brought down to something less than that which has been usual in this city for the erection of houses holding few, if any more, than one half the number who may find accommodation here.

Its seating capacity will be as follows, allowing 18 inches for each individual, viz: 368 pews, containing on the main floor, 1,105; in the main galleries, 742; in the second gallery, 209; or 2,056 in all—no person of whom, in his seat, would be more than about 80 feet distant from the speaker's lips.

The average annual expenses of the various Congregational churches in Boston do not fall short of \$5,000; which sum must be raised from the pews, or rest, a mortifying, and sometimes grievous, and insupportable deficit upon the society. That sum divided among 800 sittings—which is about the average number of those which are taxable in the ordinary houses, makes an average rate for them of \$6 25 each, or, for a pew of five sittings, \$30 75; which amounts to a practical veto upon the attendance of the thousands of families whose yearly income does not exceed \$550, and who average the payment out of that of \$150 for house rent, and are therefore bound to consult the most rigid economy in every particular, yet who do not wish to advertise their poverty by sitting in a free seat, or a *very* mean one that is not free, in the house of God.

This sum of \$5,000, divided among the 2,000 sittings which would be rentable in this proposed house, would make a yearly average rental of only \$2 50 each (or of \$12 50 for a pew for five) which puts quite a different face upon the matter. It does not seem to us an extravagant estimate, that, in such a sanctuary, a preacher might reasonably hope to have all needless impediments removed out of the way of its being said of him as of his Master, "the common people heard him gladly." The experiment of a house resembling this will at least be tried, without delay, in this city, if a Church that has long pined under the old system of big debts and high rents, can rally help enough to their poverty from those who love our Lord Jesus Christ, here and elsewhere, to pay the bills of its cost.